

AVALANCHE ADVISORY

U.S. FOREST SERVICE

FORECASTER: Davis

IDAHO PANHANDLE AVALANCHE CENTER

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/04/2011

DATE ISSUED: 03/04/2011 0730

OUTLOOK: 03/05-06/2011

This report does not apply to local ski areas within the forecast region and the hazard rating will remain valid through midnight March 4th, 2011. Special thanks to Idaho Parks and recreation for sponsoring this Avalanche advisory.

Thanks to Jake from the Selkirk Powder Co. for the pit data from the Schweitzer backcountry. Thank you snow gods for abundant powder in the hills and good sliding conditions. Congrats to Lookout Pass for the world record snowfall!


WEATHER

TODAY: Expect a 60% chance of about an inch of snow after 4PM with temperatures in the high 20s to low 30s and light W/SW winds. A Winter Weather Advisory exists for Bonner and Boundary counties from 4PM to 10AM Saturday with 4 inch accumulation in the valleys and 3-6 inches in the mountains.


TONIGHT: 80% chance of 1-3 inches, to the south, 2-4 inches, to the north, temperatures in the mid 20s, light E wind, to the north, and light S wind, to the south.

SATURDAY: The outlook for Saturday and Sunday is for continued snowfall during the day on Saturday with 1-3 inches expected, mild temperatures, high 20s to low 30s, and moderate S/SW winds. Sunday the snow will persist to the south with 1 inch possible, continued mild temperatures and light winds. **The avalanche danger will remain on isolated windloaded slopes with the expected weather.**

Selkirks and Cabinet mountains: In the Cabinets yesterday we found excellent sliding conditions on all aspects. The new snow accumulation since last Sunday was increasing in density with depth and few layers existed since storm snow was steady with only minor breaks to create layers. We did find moderate shears in surface wind slabs about 6-8 inches thick on all aspects near ridgelines and another layer in changing density storm snow about 1 foot deep. Pit data from the Selkirk Powder Co. showed increasing hardness with depth and hard shears on a NW aspect. Your main precaution today and this weekend will be on terrain steeper than 35 degrees on those wind slabs near the ridgelines on all aspects. The snow is settling from steadily warming temperatures, and now cooling, but windslabs on steep convex terrain could move with enough trigger. Avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE** on windloaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. The avalanche danger is LOW on non wind-loaded slopes less than 35 degrees.

2 Moderate		Heightened avalanche conditions on specific terrain features. Evaluate snow and terrain carefully; identify features of concern	Natural avalanches unlikely; human-triggered avalanches possible.	Small avalanches in specific areas; or large avalanches in isolated areas.
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St. Regis Basin and Silver valley: Congratulations to Lookout Pass for setting the record for the most snowfall in the world this past week. Carole and Dan can confirm this, as they found a "tremendous" snowpack and a weather observer at Haugan said they had 5 feet of snow on the level right after the storm. In all this new snow they only revealed moderate shears on changing density layers in the upper 2.5 feet of consolidating new snow. They did notice evidence of past slide activity which was small and isolated. Because of the amount of snow the mountains received and past windloading the avalanche danger is rated **CONSIDERABLE** on windloaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. The avalanche danger is MODERATE on non wind-loaded slopes less than 35 degrees.

3 Considerable		Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative	Natural avalanches possible; human-triggered avalanches likely.	Small avalanches in many areas; or large avalanches in specific areas; or very large avalanches in isolated areas.
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In your travels today watch steep wind-loaded and wind-hardened snow. The snow across our forecast region is settling because of gradually increasing temperatures and the steady accumulation compressing potential weak layers. More snow in the forecast and moderate temperatures will continue the stabilizing trend. If sunshine persists today, no not that, be aware of warming on steep S/SW'erly slopes.

The next avalanche advisory will be issued March 11th.

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Have a safe and pleasant weekend!!!!

